

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are pending. In the Office Action dated February 7, 2006, the Examiner took the following action: (1) rejected claims 13-15 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,247,695 to Kashiya et al. ("Kashiya"); (2) rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kashiya as applied to claim 13 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,396,641 to Lobst ("Lobst"); (3) rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kashiya as applied to claim 13 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,266,758 to van Hook ("van Hook"); (4) rejected claims 31-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lobst; (5) rejected claim 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lobst as applied to claim 39 above, and further in view of Kashiya; and (6) allowed claims 1-12 and 19-30.

Although applicant believes claims 13-18 and 31-40 are patentable over the cited references, applicant has cancelled these claims to obtain an early allowance of this application. Therefore, the only claims remaining in this application are allowed claims 1-12 and 19-30. All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a timely Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures:

Postcard

Fee Transmittal Sheet (+copy)

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